(b) identifying whether the read-out piece of decision information satisfies the predetermined format, so as to determine whether the storage unit is normal or whether the storage unit is not normal if the read-out piece of decision information has been destroyed.

3. (Once Amended) A method in accordance with claim 2, the method further comprising the step of:

(c) providing a display representing that the storage unit is not normal, when the step (b) determines that the storage unit is not normal.

4. (Once Amended) A method in accordance with claim 2, the method further comprising the step of:

(d) discontinuing a printing operation of the printer, when the step (b) determined that the storage unit is not normal.

6. (Once Amended) A method of determining whether a storage unit included in an ink cartridge is normal, wherein the ink cartridge is configured to be detachably attached to a printer, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) reading a piece of decision information that has been registered in advance in a predetermined format, from the storage unit; and

(b) identifying whether the read-out piece of decision information satisfies the predetermined format, so as to determine whether the storage unit is normal,

wherein the step (b) determines that the storage unit is not normal in the case where the read-out piece of decision information does not satisfy the predetermined format, wherein the step (b) uses a piece of information relating to a month of manufacture of the ink cartridge as the piece of decision information, wherein the piece of information relating to the month of manufacture of the ink cartridge is expressed by a data length of four bits, and the

step (b) determines that the storage unit is not normal in the case where all the four bits have an identical digit, that is, either one of '0' and '1'.

7. (Once Amended) A method in accordance with claim 6, the method further comprising the step of:

(c) providing a display representing that the storage unit is not normal, when the step (b) determines that the storage unit is not normal.

8. (Once Amended) A method in accordance with claim 6, the method further comprising the step of:

(d) discontinuing a printing operation of the printer, when the step (b) determines that the storage unit is not normal.

~~10. (Once Amended) A printer, to which an ink cartridge having a storage unit is~~ detachably attached, the printer comprising:

a reading unit reading a piece of decision information, wherein the piece of information has been registered in advance in a predetermined format, from the storage unit; and

a decision unit identifying whether the read-out piece of decision information satisfies the predetermined format, so as to determine whether the storage unit is normal or whether the storage unit is not normal if the read-out piece of decision information has been destroyed.

16. (Once Amended) A printer, to which an ink cartridge having a storage unit is detachably attached, the printer comprising:

a reading unit reading a piece of decision information, wherein the piece of information has been registered in advance in a predetermined format, from the storage unit; and

a decision unit identifying whether the read-out piece of decision information satisfies the predetermined format, so as to determine whether or not the storage unit is normal,

wherein the decision unit determines that the storage unit is not normal in the case where the read-out piece of decision information does not satisfy the predetermined format, wherein the piece of decision information is a piece of information relating to a month of manufacture of the ink cartridge, wherein the piece of information relating to the month of manufacture of the ink cartridge is expressed by a data length of four bits, and the decision unit determines that the storage unit is not normal in the case where all the four bits have an identical digit, that is, either one of '0' and '1'.

21. (Once Amended) A computer readable recording medium, on which a specific computer program is recorded, the specific computer program being used to determine whether a storage unit is normal, wherein the storage unit is included in an ink cartridge that is detachably attached to a printer, the specific computer program comprising:

a program code that causes a computer to read a piece of decision information, wherein the piece of decision information has been registered in advance in a predetermined format, from the storage unit;

a program code that causes the computer to identify whether the read-out piece of decision information satisfies the predetermined format; and

a program code that causes the computer to determine that the storage unit is not normal in the case where the read-out piece of decision information does not satisfy the predetermined format if the read-out piece of decision information has been destroyed.

22. (Once Amended) A method of determining whether a readable and writable storage unit is normal, wherein the readable and writable storage unit is included in an ink cartridge that is detachably attached to a printer, the method comprising the steps of:

reading a piece of decision information from the storage unit; and

determining whether the storage unit is normal, based on the read-out piece of decision information, or whether the storage unit is not normal if the read-out piece of decision information has been destroyed.

Please add the following new claim:

23. (New) A printer, to which an ink cartridge having a storage unit is detachably attached, the printer comprising:

a reading unit reading a piece of decision information, wherein the piece of information has been registered in advance in a predetermined format, from the storage unit; and

a decision unit identifying whether the read-out piece of decision information satisfies the predetermined format, so as to determine whether or not the storage unit is normal,

wherein the decision unit determines that the storage unit is normal in the case where the read-out piece of decision information satisfies the predetermined format, wherein the piece of decision information is a piece of information relating to a month of manufacture of the ink cartridge, wherein the piece of information relating to the month of manufacture of the ink cartridge is expressed by a data length of four bits, and the decision unit determines that the storage unit is not normal in the case where all the four bits have an identical digit, that is, either one of '0' and '1'.